

K-149

Colechester  
Georgetown  
1846

In 1668, a 1000 acre tract on the Sassafras River called Colechester was first patented to William Smith.<sup>1</sup> Later in the 17th Century, it was acquired by William Pearce (who resided down river at Marshy Point) who gave the plantation to his son Gideon in 1713. Gideon established a ferry operation there which provided passage across the Sassafras. "Ferry Point" was mentioned as the location for George Town when it was formally established in the Legislative Act of 1736. That same year, Gideon Pearce was named as the grantor of the original 100 lots surveyed. In 1742 Pearce had his plantation resurveyed. "Colechester Resurveyed" included 1051 acres.<sup>2</sup> After his death in 1751, Colechester descended to Pearce's son James who in turn had George Town resurveyed in 1787, which increased the boundaries and the number of lots.

James Pearce (d. 1802) served in the Lower House from Kent County after the Revolution. He was also a vestryman of Shrewsbury Parish and Commissioner of Tax as well. Beside his farm, he owned a grist mill and was actively involved in the buying and selling of real estate, primarily in Kent and Cecil Counties. When Pearce died, his personal estate was valued at \$2796, a large fortune for the period.

While there are remnants of a basement and west wall dating from the 18th Century upon which the present house was constructed, too little remains to conjecture its original appearance. What exists today was constructed under the ownership of Jacob Malsberger who purchased the

farm in 1845.

The house is a late Federal style frame building composed of a five bay, 2 1/2 story frame section with a three bay, 2 story lower service wing. Both parts are one room deep—the typical arrangement in Kent County. The plan was similar to many farmhouses with central stairhall. A third section which once stood on the west end was demolished many years ago. Between the two parts of the house there is a brick gable reputed to belong to the 18th century Pearce farmhouse.

In the basement, the western half is indeed early and it possesses some unexplained recesses in its north wall. The eastern half of the basement is contemporary with the rest of the structure above. In that portion there is a six foot deep storage pit which measures 6' x 8' across.

On both the 1860 map and the 1877 Atlas, two houses appear on the farm. The latter labels it "Capt. A. Woodall Res." His name also appears at the bottom of the hill in Georgetown, where he was to live later, adjacent his warehouse. Woodall purchased Colechester in 1875. To this day it remains in the possession of his descendants.

1. Patents, Lib. 10, fol. 25.
2. Patents, Lib. EI 6, fol. 675.

K-149

18th century; 1846?

Colchester (Tolchester)

Near Georgetown

Private

Except for about thirty years in the middle of the nineteenth century, Colchester has been owned by only two families. Ownership of the Pearce (Pierce) family began in the seventeenth century with William Pearce, who was high sheriff of Cecil County, of which this section of Kent County was a part from 1674 to 1706. In 1713/14 he gave Colchester, then 955 acres, to his son Gideon, apparently the same Gideon who in the 1730s platted part of it for Georgetown, a town authorized by the colonial legislature. From 1875 to the present the farm has been owned by the Andrew Woodall family, probably the leading family in nearby Georgetown during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the family's ownership, however, the farm was always tenanted. Although the present 2-1/2 storey, 5-bay-wide, frame main section is interesting as an example of middle nineteenth century construction and style, with a late continuation of the Federal form, it is the remnant of an earlier building incorporated into the present main section that is the most provocative. In the cellar, in the back wall, are three irregularly-spaced arched niches that were part of the original construction and because of which the whole wall was built deeper. Their purpose is not known, but judging from the construction of the remnant, they appear to date from the early eighteenth century. What happened to the old house there is not known; it may have burned. There is also what seems to be a stone-lined cold-storage pit in the 1840s section of the cellar that is highly unusual, probably built by the Malsberger family along with the rest of the frame, main section. There was once an ice house, so this pit is not a substitute for it. The northern section of the farm, on the Sassafras River, may have been the location of the Kent County militia's stand in 1813 as the British came up the river to burn Georgetown during the War of 1812. Earthworks were once said to be visible, and an old cannonball has occasionally surfaced. The Pearce family in the late eighteenth century evidently farmed intensively. According to the census of 1790, James Pearce, then the owner of Colchester, owned 36 slaves, which made him one of the largest slave owners of Kent County in that year.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Colchester (preferred); Tolchester; Pearce Farm

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number West side Rt. 213, lane south of Georgetown cemetery \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Georgetown \_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_ congressional district

state Maryland county Kent

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
___ district	___ public	<u>X</u> occupied	___ agriculture
<u>X</u> building(s)	<u>X</u> private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational
___ site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	___ entertainment
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial
	<u>X</u> not applicable	<u>X</u> no	___ military
			___ other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mrs. Charlotte W. Dennett

648-5219

street & number 10 Glenn Avon Drive telephone no.: (203) 637-1215

city, town Riverside state and zip code Connecticut 06878

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber EHP 117

street & number Cross Street folio 23

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland Historic Sites Inventory - HABS Inventory

date September 4, 1968 X federal X state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

## 7. Description

Survey No. K-149

### Condition

☐ excellent

☐ good

☒ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved      date of move

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Colchester Farm is located in the northwestern portion of the Sassafras River neck that is between Dyer Creek (formerly Broad Oak Creek of Hendley's Creek) and Mill Creek on the east. Georgetown and Galena are part of this neck, and Route 213 is the public road through it. The lane from the west side of Route 213 to the farm is a very long one. The frame house now at Colchester Farm was built in the 1840s, probably by the Malsberger family, in a late Federal style. There is a 2-1/2 storey, five-bay-wide main section with central entry and stair hall, with one room on each side on the first storey. On the west end of the main section there is a lower, two-storey, three-bay-wide wing section, with the first floor now entirely a kitchen. A wing that was on the present wing's west end has been removed. It is said to have contained the space earlier used for a kitchen. There is a fragment of an eighteenth-century brick building incorporated into the main section; its entire west end is used. All farm outbuildings of significance are gone.

(Continued)

## 8. Significance

Survey No. K-149

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 184 Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Except for about thirty years in the middle of the nineteenth century; Colchester has been owned by only two families. Ownership of the Pearce (Pierce) family began in the seventeenth century with William Pearce, who was high sheriff of Cecil County, of which this section of Kent County was a part from 1674 to 1706. In 1713/14 he gave Colchester, then 955 acres, to his son Gideon, apparently the same Gideon who in the 1730s platted part of it for the laid-out town of Georgetown, a town authorized by the colonial legislature. From 1875 to the present the farm has been owned by the Andrew Woodall family, probably the leading family in nearby Georgetown of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. During the family's ownership, however, the farm was always tenanted. Although the present frame main section is interesting as an example of middle (circa 1846) nineteenth century construction and style, with a late continuation of the Federal form, it is the remnant of an earlier building incorporated into the present main section that is the most provocative. In the cellar, in the back wall, are three irregularly-spaced arched niches that were part of the original construction and because of which the whole wall was built deeper. Their purpose is not known, but judging from the construction of the remnant, they appear to date from the early eighteenth century. What happened to the old house there is not known; it may have burned. There is also what seems to be a stone-lined cold-storage pit in the 1840s section of the cellar that is highly unusual, probably built by the Malsberger family along with the rest of the frame, main section. There was once an ice house, so this pit is not a substitute for it. The northern section of the farm, on the Sassafras River, may have been the location of the Kent County militia's stand in 1813 as the British came up the river to burn Georgetown during the War of 1812. Earthworks were once said to be visible, and an old cannonball has occasionally surfaced. The Pearce family in the late eighteenth century evidently farmed intensively. According to the census of 1790, James Pearce, then the owner of Colchester, owned 36 slaves; he was one of the largest slave owners of Kent County in that year.

Survey No. K-149

## PS-2746

The frame main section at Colchester farm is a rare dated building, though the date is not entirely legible. Apparently as part of the original cornice left untouched during later remodeling, there is a dropped "box" or post section with an applied star in the lower portion and the date very faintly above. The date may once have been applied, with what is remaining being only paint edges, or it may have been incised and largely filled in. It appears to say 1846, though the last number is not clearly a 6.

The five-bay main section is about 41 feet wide and 21 feet deep. The latter was also the apparent depth of the earlier, eighteenth-century here whose west end wall laid in English bond remains. This is an unusually deep measurement for a house of that period. The only wing that now remains at Colchester is about 20 feet wide and 18-1/2 feet deep. It is flush with the main section on the front, main facade that faces south/southeast and inset on the rear. The exterior walls of both sections (except for the brick wall, which is heavily patched) are covered with asbestos shingles applied over horizontal, lapped weatherboard with an exposure of circa 6".

There are two cellar sections, one under the wing at the west and one under the main section. The west cellar foundation walls are three-sided and hence later than at least the English-bond main section west wall. The wing cellar is of no particular interest. The main-section cellar is reached from an opening cut through the common wall between wing and main cellars. There is a formerly-used entry in the east end of the main section, probably mid-nineteenth century, with bulkhead doors present but steps gone. The main-section cellar is essentially one open space, broken only by elongated piers to support the changed framing system under the stair hall, a common device by the mid nineteenth century. The floor is dirt.

The main-section cellar has two construction dates, that of the western section appearing to date to the eighteenth century. The old cellar walls, front and rear, appear to account for somewhat more than a third of the width of the section foundation (about 13'-3" measured on the interior). There is a clear change in the brickwork at that point on both front and rear walls, perhaps at the juncture of the east foundation wall of a former building here. There is an offset here; the older foundation walls protrude 2-3" into the cellar, compared to the mid-nineteenth-century foundation which continues to the east.

At the center of the west end wall (entirely within the cellar) is a very large arched chimney base that is 6'-9" wide overall, with a round-headed opening that is 45" wide and 40" deep. The arch is dirt-floored from the level of the two-brick "curb" running across the opening; from there to the center of the arch the height is 65". The arch, like the end foundation wall, is also laid in English bond. It seems never to have been used for or intended for a fire. The arch is parged and whitewashed smoothly. There are no signs of repair or patching. There are offset single brick courses on the straight sides of the opening from the initial construction of the arch that were probably later used for shelves.

(continued)

Within the north (rear) wall of this old section there is a set of three unequally-spaced niches. The first is 46" from the cellar northwest corner (old brick section) to niche center. From there it is 44" more toward the east to the center of the middle niche, and then 40" to the center of the easternmost one. They measure 12" wide x 13-1/2" deep x 15" high to the center of their shallow segmental arches. There is a curb beginning about 12-13" from the northwest cellar corner, that is about 4-1/2" to 5" deep, of brick. It runs to where the old foundation stops and the new begins (the joint with the new foundation). There is no such curb along the front old foundation wall, nor along the west end. It is now about 6" high above the dirt floor as it is now. The lower edge of the niches is about 20" above the upper surface of the curb. It is possible that this is simply a remnant of an old brick floor with no relationship to the purpose of the niches, but it is also possible that the curb below them is related.

The curb and wall around the openings (both above and below and to the sides) is full of splatters and runs that appear to be dark grey or black. These splatters and runs do seem to be on top of earlier whitewashing. They may extend to the new foundation area.

The niches seem original to the old north foundation wall; the work is neat and appears untampered with. In addition, the old rear wall is somewhat thicker (apparently one brick thick) than the old front wall. It is about 9-1/2" to 10" from the face of the old front foundation wall to the sill face; for the rear old wall the distance is about 12", though there may be a difference in sill sizes. There is no evidence of any arch-top opening in these niches, such as for a flue. The interiors of the niches are also spattered and are now empty.

There is a remnant of a partition (perhaps) or part of a shelf system, which may have closed off this northwest corner of the cellar from the chimney base on the south, apparently extending to between the second and third niche on the east. One upright remains near the chimney base arch at the west end wall center; these wooden remnants do not show splatters. There is one flat stone in the dirt floor at the edge of the possibly enclosed area.

The main section cellar had two windows in the rear wall, which are now closed, with the one in the old foundation section in the northwest bay. These closed rear windows appear wider than the front windows, which are not closed and have metal bars. The sash of the front windows are most likely replacements.

In the circa 1846 cellar's northeast corner there is a pit 8 feet wide (east-west) and 6 feet front to back. Its depth into the ground is about 6'-7", though there is some debris in the bottom. The house foundation here is of fieldstone up to the height of the cellar floor on the rear, north wall but extending about 3 feet above the cellar floor on the east end in the pit area. There is an adjacent chimney base, totally different from the west-end base.

(continued)

It is of typical mid-nineteenth century construction with straight pilasters. One now descends into the pit via a modern boat ladder. The two pit walls that are not house foundation walls are of fieldstone with upper courses of brick. They now terminate flush with the dirt floor. They may have been higher at one time. Evidently in the early twentieth century this pit was used for dairy storage for daily household use. At this time there was a large, separate icehouse for the farm.

Not much is known about the Malsberger family that probably built the 1840s house. They may have been German Catholics and perhaps originally from Cecil County or Pennsylvania. The family, led by Jacob Malsberger, bought the house in 1845 from the last of the Pearce family. The last male Pearce (James) died in 1832; his wife Catherine was the seller to the Malsbergers. The pit may be construction customarily seen to the north.

Interesting in the main section is a surviving grained door and a stair with unusual balusters, that are plainly turned and tapered. There are several handsome mantels, one of marbelized slate or perhaps even marble.

1501495404

Form 10-445  
(5/62)

PHOTOS MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE  
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS

1. STATE Maryland COUNTY Kent TOWN Georgetown VICINITY STREET NO. Rt. 213, 1 mile south of Sassafras river. (west) ORIGINAL OWNER ORIGINAL USE dwelling PRESENT OWNER Justine Woodall PRESENT USE tenant house WALL CONSTRUCTION frame NO. OF STORIES 2½		HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY K - 149	
		2. NAME Pearce-Woodall Farm DATE OR PERIOD c. 1840 STYLE Federal ARCHITECT BUILDER	
		3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE	
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION OPEN TO PUBLIC no			
<p>The Pearce-Woodall Farm is a 19th-century frame farm house, five bays long and one bay deep, 2½ stories <sup>is high</sup> tall. It has similarities to the <sup>main</sup> house at Beck Landing on Broad Neck, Kent County. The tenant <sup>says</sup> the date, 1846, appeared on the <sup>side of the building</sup> siding before it was covered with asbestos siding. The gable between the main portion and the three-bay-long, two-story kitchen-wing is built of brick laid in English bond.</p> <p>The center door has sidelights with transom having diamond panes. There are no snuffers but hinges indicate that there were some previously. Sash is 6/6 in the main section and 9/6 and 6/6 in the wing. Box cornice with torus moldings set off the "A" roof. There are segmental upper sash on the dormers of the main roof while the dormer on the wing has an "A" roof and regular rectangular sash.</p> <p>Behind the kitchen is a tail obelisk tombstone bearing the name of James Pearce, <del>(the son of James Pearce, who died in 1846)</del></p>			
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE Endangered no Interior Exterior fair			
6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)			
7. PHOTOGRAPH		9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER	
3. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.		Michael Bourne	
		DATE OF RECORD Sept. 4, 1968	

Name Pearce - Woodall Farm MHT# K-149Location Kent County Georgetown  
COUNTY town

address or road#

First owner of record (James Pearce ?) DATEPresent owner Justin Woodall DATEAddress Georgetown

Parcel or Deed #

Original use dwellin

Present use

Md. Map Coordinates

Long. &amp; Lat. reading

Style FederalDate(s) of construction C. 1846 (owner said date was in side before being covered)

Architect

Builder

## DESCRIPTION:

2 1/2 NUMBER of stories frame type wall constructionFoundation-basement brickWall construction- frame covered with asbestos siding Wall b/w sections built of brick - Eng bond.

Water table, string course, other decorative work essential to walls

Chimneys on each gable

Name \_\_\_\_\_

MHT# \_\_\_\_\_

K-149

Entrance type & placement center - with side lights +  
transom having diamond panes

Windows 6/6 = main section  
9/6 + 6/6 in wing

Shutters NO (used to be some as indicated by chips)

Roof type A covering —

Cornice, eaves box with fascia molding

Dormers, cupolas seg arch roof + 5/6 (2) on main section  
1 pediment 6/6 arch = wing

Porches across entire facade w/ doric columns

Wings, hyphens absent 3 bays + 1 (2 upstairs)

Interior:

Stairway \_\_\_\_\_

Doors \_\_\_\_\_

Trim \_\_\_\_\_

Other notable work \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

MHT#

K-149

Physical condition \_\_\_\_\_

good

Environment \_\_\_\_\_

farm

## References:

MHT Color slide # \_\_\_\_\_

MHT B &amp; W # \_\_\_\_\_

Owner contacted ~~the~~ tenant \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

Recorder \_\_\_\_\_

Michael Bourne

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Sept 4, 1968

## Summary:

The Pierce-Woodall Farm is a 19<sup>th</sup> century <sup>frame</sup> farmhouse, 5 bays long x 1 bay deep, 2 1/2 story tall. It has similarities to the house at Back Landing in Broad Neck. The tenant said the date 1846 appeared in the side before it was covered with asbestos siding. The gate b/w the main portion and the 3 bay long 2<sup>nd</sup> story with wing is built of brick and is English bond. <sup>#</sup> The center door has side lights with transoms having diamond panes. There are no shutters but hinges indicate that there were some previously. Sash is 6/6 in main section and 9/6 + 6/6 = win. Brackets with torus molding. Segmented ~~sash~~ in 2 dormers on roof, small dormer <sup>w/ 8"</sup> on wing.

Enclosures: e.g. Map, Historical significance, sketch of floor plan, and angle of photos, etc.

55'

111000 FEET

Knights Island

HALL CREEK

SASSAFRAS

CECIL CO  
KENT CO

RIVER HT

Fredericktown

K-582

560  
FEE

Old Field Pt  
Little Marsh

WOODLAND

Daffodil Island

K-284  
K-285  
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K-600

Westminster

BM 72

K-573

K-149

K-584

CREEK

DYER CR

PRIVATE

K-312

K-575

Galena

K-151

K-585

Olivet Ch Cem

BM 83

Wesley Ch

BM 69

Oakes Hill

K-285

GALENA QUADRANGLE

MASSEY 3 MI



K-149

Colchester

Rt. 213, near Georgetown

M. Q. Fallaw - 9/12/85

View to north

K149  
#36  
6cc

**NEWLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
LIBRARY**

K-149 Colchester 1846

A



K-149

Colchester

Rt. 213, near Georgetown

M. Q. Fallaw - 9/12/85

View to southeast

#32

K149

Case upturn

 K-149 Colchester 1844

B